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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OUAGADOUGOU 000816

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [MASS](#) [UV](#)

SUBJECT: BURKINA FASO: DAS FITZGERALD MEETS WITH PRIME  
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 515

Classified By: CDA Samuel C. Laeuchli for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In separate meetings with AF DAS Fitzgerald, Burkina Faso's Prime Minister and Minister of Defense asked for assistance in coping with the aftermath of the September 1st flooding. They also highlighted President Compaore's regional mediation efforts and elaborated on the GOBF's views concerning key political issues in the region. Both expressed satisfaction with the growing bilateral relationship between the United States and Burkina Faso. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Prime Minister Tertius Zongo met for nearly an hour with DAS Fitzgerald September 16. Near the end of a relaxed meeting, Zongo asked how Burkina Faso could quickly obtain pre-fabricated field hospitals from the United States. The major hospital in downtown Ouagadougou, he said, was seriously damaged by the floods, and replacement structures are needed urgently to handle health care demands. This request was a key item on Zongo's agenda for the meeting.

¶3. (C) Zongo said that the Israeli Ambassador to Burkina Faso, resident in Abidjan, had offered to obtain pre-fabricated, containerized hospital units from Israel, and had suggested that the USG might be willing to fund them. DAS Fitzgerald responded coolly to the idea of U.S. funding, but responded that there could be other ways to assist. According to Zongo, the GOBF has already identified a site where the field hospitals could be set up and promised to provide the Embassy a detailed project proposal (Comment: Post has already approached AFRICOM about this request. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense commented on regional political issues, especially the Ivorian peace process. The Prime Minister had just returned from a short trip to Cote d'Ivoire where he and his Ivorian counterpart chaired a joint Burkinabe-Ivorian Council of Ministers. This was part of a broader mission headed by President Compaore that the Ivoirians requested on short notice. Compaore stayed longer, but Zongo said that he himself could not be gone longer due to ongoing flood-relief efforts.

¶5. (C) Zongo said that the Ivorian electoral process has been delayed as a result of "data merging difficulties" for 3 of 68 electoral districts. He added that he really was convinced the reasons were "technical" and not political. In Zongo's view, Gbagbo has a good chance of winning the elections, and further delays actually may hurt his chances rather than help them.

¶6. (C) Zongo and MOD Yero Boly discussed regional issues including Algeria, Niger, Mali, Togo and Guinea. Both painted a picture of Compaore as the "adult supervision" in the region. Zongo spoke disparagingly of the leadership in

Guinea. According to the PM, Compaore had returned from a visit to Guinea "discouraged" and concerned about Dadis's mental stability. Turning to the AQIM threat, Zongo suggested that Algeria and Mali needed closer collaboration and that a regional meeting would help resolve the issue. Zongo also said that Compaore remains very involved as facilitator in Togo.

17. (C) Zongo and Boly underlined how pleased they were with the positive bilateral relationship between the United States and Burkina Faso. Zongo spoke glowingly of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's efforts and praised the relationship with the Embassy. Boly stressed that the bilateral military relationship was strong. As DAS Fitzgerald highlighted USG appreciation for Burkina Faso's hosting Special Operations aircraft, Boly responded that there was absolutely no problem with the planes. He also said that it was due to USG support that Burkina Faso had been able to deploy PKO troops to Darfur.

18. (C) Comment: The message of both meetings was clear: Burkina Faso values the relationship with the United States and likes the present trajectory. Both Zongo and Boly were relaxed and at ease. The aftermath of the September 1st flooding continues to preoccupy the leadership, and Zongo is looking for assistance to help with long-term rehabilitation efforts. Post requests that the Department, USAID and AFRICOM investigate the deployment of a temporary hospital to meet the soaring demand.

DAS Fitzgerald has cleared this cable.

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